

## Map 04 :: Porter Square

- (01) North Cambridge Senior Center: Linda Lichtman
- (02) North Cambridge Senior Center: David Fichter
- (03) Porter Square Shopping Center (back wall): Jeff Oberdorfer, Mass Art Students, Joshua Winer
- (04) Maria Baldwin School: Nancy O'Neil
- (T) MBTA Station: Susumu Shingu, Carlos Dorrien, Mags Harries, William Reimann, David Phillips

## Linda Lichtman North Cambridge Senior Center

**Title:** Landscape Frieze in Glass

**Date:** 1990

**Materials:** Etched stained glass, painted, and leaded

**Dimensions:** 18" x 20'

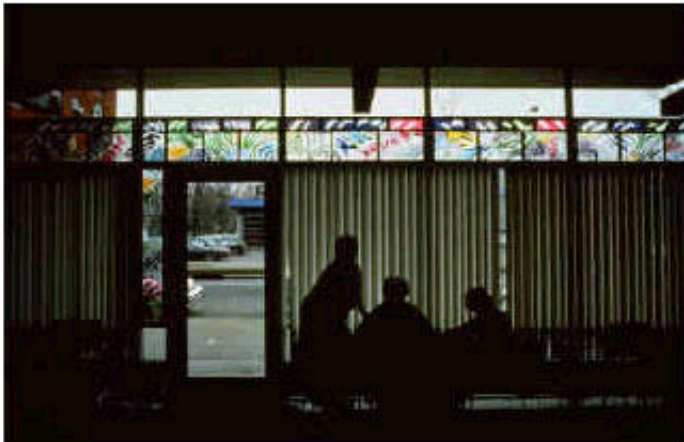
**Location:** 2050 Massachusetts Avenue



These five panels of etched, stained and leaded glass run along the 20'-long glass window in the lobby of the Cambridge Senior Center. "I work with glass so that it will reflect nature and be alive to light, constantly changing like all things in nature," Lichtman says. "I tear away the surface of the glass with hydrofluoric acid or build up layers of paints, transparent enamels, and silver stain to increase richness and density." From this hazardous process emerges the most delicate of designs. Lichtman explains that each specific piece of glass etches differently. The result is the abstract imagery in "Landscape Frieze in Glass," which illumines the large window in the Cambridge Senior Center, as though the glass itself contained the light.

Lichtman earned her BFA in painting from Massachusetts College of Art in 1974. She studied with a master glass artist Patrick Reyntiens at Burleighfield House in England and apprenticed to other glass artists in the U.K., Canada and Germany before continuing studies at the Museum School in Boston. Lichtman has lived and worked in Cambridge since 1978.

*Funded by North Cambridge Stabilization Council, Business Association of North Cambridge, North Cambridge Senior Center, Cambridge Lumber, Bank of Boston, and a grant from the Massachusetts Arts Lottery, a program of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, as administered by the Cambridge Arts Council.*



## David Fichter North Cambridge Senior Center

**Title:** Cambridge Senior Center Mural

**Date:** 1986

**Materials:** Acrylic on concrete

**Dimensions:** 10' x 9'

**Location:** 2050 Massachusetts Avenue



David Fichter's colorful mural was designed and planned in collaboration with a group of North Cambridge seniors. The two-part mural is divided by a door, each section depicting a different scene. The left-hand section focuses on the passing of history from one generation to another, showing an image of an elderly woman talking to her granddaughter. The image is overlaid with snapshots from the woman's photo album that tell the story of her life. The right-hand section of the mural takes senior activities as its theme, depicting elders dancing, singing, and orating, against a backdrop of traditional quilt patterns.

Fichter is a resident of Cambridge and has painted murals in the Eastern, Southern, and Midwestern United States, as well as in Nicaragua and in the former Soviet countries of Russia, Georgia and Armenia. Several of his works are located in other public areas and buildings around Cambridge.

*Commissioned through the Cambridge Arts Council's Public Arts Program. Funded in part by the Lotus Corporation and a grant from the Massachusetts Arts Lottery, a program of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, as administered by the Cambridge Arts Council.*



## Privately Sponsored Public Art Porter Square Shopping Center

### Artists:

Jeff Oberdorfer, Mass Art Students, Joshua Winer

**Title:** Davenport Street Mural

**Date:** 1977 - 2000

**Materials:** Acrylic on masonry

**Dimensions:** 26' x 367'

**Location:** Davenport Street



In 1977, Porter Square resident Jeff Oberdorfer received a grant from the CAC to turn a large back wall of the shopping center into an extension of the neighborhood. Oberdorfer and a small group of dedicated neighbors painted a mural of triple-decker houses, very much like the abutting buildings. In 1984, the mural was restored by artist Lisa Carter, who added several figures to the scene.

In 1989 a second large mural was painted by students from Massachusetts College of Art under the supervision of Professor Al Gowan. The mural shows the Rand Estate, which used to be where the shopping center is now.

Finally, in 2000, muralist Joshua Winer turned a remaining 200-foot long stretch of the back wall into a lively neighborhood street scene with houses and gardens. Designed as a response to the character of the North Cambridge neighborhood, the mural references the architectural styles and history of Porter Square, including the area's cattle yards and the famous "Porterhouse Steak."

*The first mural was funded through the U.S. Comprehensive Employment and Training Act and a U.S. Housing and Urban Development Quality of Life Grant. The second mural was funded through a grant from the Cambridge Arts Council, and the third mural was funded by Gravestar Incorporated.*

**Nancy O'Neil**  
**Maria Baldwin School**

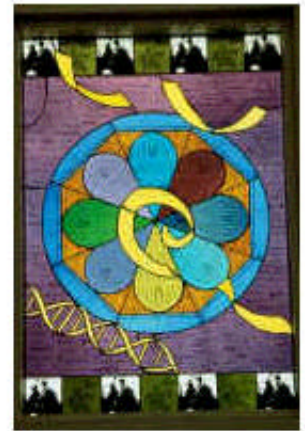
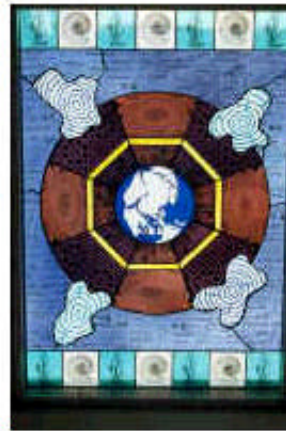
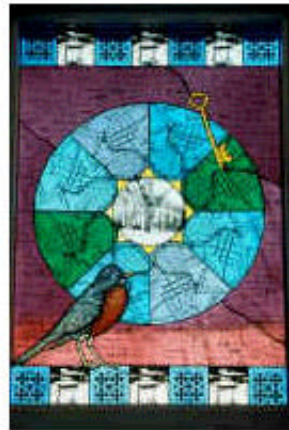
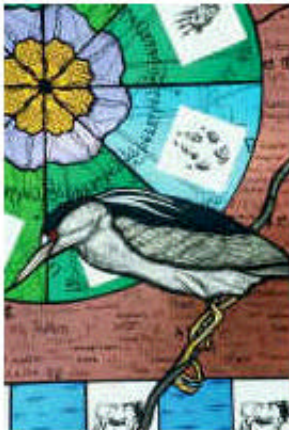
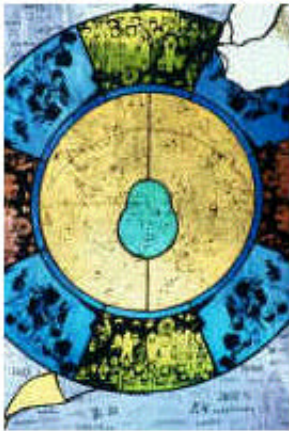
**Title:** Untitled

**Date:** 1996

**Materials:** Stained glass

**Dimensions:** Eight windows, 21" x 30" each

**Location:** 28 Sacramento Street



The main message of these eight stained-glass windows is "hope, dream, imagine," words that appear at the center of each piece. Surrounding photographs, drawings, and text create a collage of local history. Topics range from archeology (represented by old maps, an Algonquian wampum belt, and fossils) to nature (birds and trees from the area). Photos of students and a page from a 19th-century textbook illustrate the school's heritage. Finally a DNA double helix, a computer, the area's first printing press, and a portrait of poet EE Cummings remind students of great scientific, cultural, and artistic achievements.

Maine-based Nancy O'Neil has been a practicing stained glass artist since the early 1970s, soon after she graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York. Her commissions include many New England churches, schools, and public buildings. She has exhibited at the Portland, Maine Museum of Art, Bates College, and the Portland School of Art. Although her primary medium is stained glass, she has also incorporated fiber optics, cast glass, and neon into her work.

*Commissioned through the Cambridge Arts Council's Public Art Program*





## Seeing and Experiencing

Open the doors of the Maria Baldwin School, turn the corner, and look up the stairs. You'll see a pair of stained-glass windows on each staircase landing. Artist Nancy O'Neil envisioned that "[the windows] will bring in wonderful color and pattern during the day for everyone using the stairs, and will be glowing beacons seen from outside at night."

Look carefully at each panel of glass. What shapes appear throughout? Each panel has many parts. Are they the same for each window?

When you look at the text and images, do you think that the artist had help from the school's students?

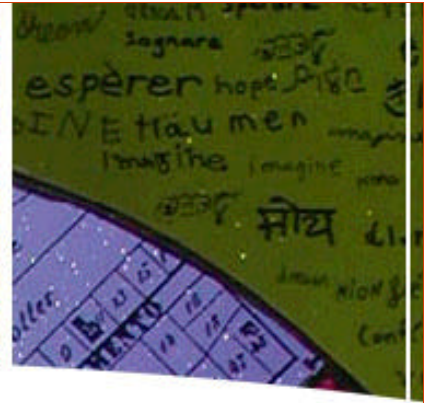
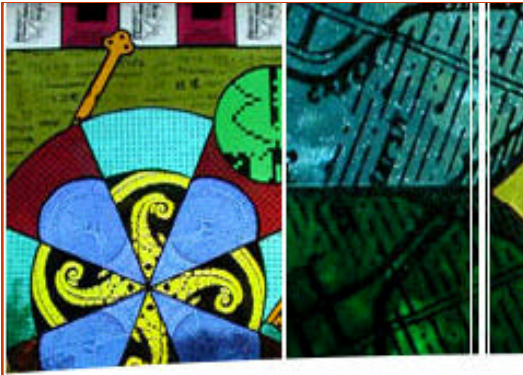
One of the definitions of "kaleidoscopic" is "having lots of different facets." O'Neil's windows are full of ideas - as many facets as a kaleidoscope. Most of the images represent specific ideas. Focus on a few images. What ideas do they represent? Do any stand for science?

Go on a treasure hunt. Look for:

- Maria Baldwin, former principal of this school and one of the first African American principals in the country
- Map of old Cambridge
- Celestial map from 1776
- Tree
- Algonquin wampum belt
- Astrolabe (an ancient instrument used to measure altitudes of heavenly bodies)
- Computer image of patterns representing chaos
- Map showing the northeastern United States attached to Africa
- Architect's blueprint of a door
- 1640 Cambridge map showing a stockade
- Tracks of local animal species

What three words appear on each of the windows? These words appear in several different languages. How many languages can you identify? Why did O'Neil choose to represent these specific cultures?





## On-site

**What you will need:**  
Sketchpad or paper, pens or pencil.

Each of O'Neil's stained-glass pieces tells a story. Make a list of ideas that you think are central to each panel. Do any of the panels share ideas? Do certain symbols or shapes appear in more than one piece? Sketch these shapes.

## Hands-on

### What you will need:

Plexiglas (any size although O'Neil's windows are approximately 21" x 30"), colored see-through thin plastic (should be sticky on one side), scissors, permanent markers, acrylic paint, paper (tracing paper, construction paper and tissue), Mylar, glue.

For centuries, artists have used stained glass to make an environment more inviting. Churches and other spiritual places have relied on stained glass to add an inspirational and ethereal presence.

Make your own stained "glass." Cut shapes out of the papers and see-through plastic. Glue or stick these shapes to your Plexiglas plate. Overlap the tissue papers to get different colors. Experiment with adding acrylic, watercolor or tempera paint. Use the permanent marker to draw objects or words.

Once the piece has dried, tape it to a window and watch the light come through, casting shadows and colors on the opposite wall. What materials can you see through and what materials are opaque (don't let the light pass through)? Can you see through the tissue paper? The construction paper?

### What you will need:

Paper towel or toilet paper roll, clear contact paper, glitter, paper shapes, small beads, confetti, construction paper, masking tape, clear tape, plastic wrap.

If Nancy O'Neil's stained-glass windows were at the end of a kaleidoscope the colors would change with the turn of the wheel. Words and images would shift and collide.

Build your own kaleidoscope. Trace the end of the roll on the clear contact paper and cut out the circle. Peel the backing off the contact paper and lay it down with the sticky surface face up. Stick a variety of materials (glitter, confetti, colored bits of paper, beads) on its surface. Cut out another circle from the contact paper. Make sure it's a little bigger around than the first circle. Place the sticky side on top of the other sticky circle (you will be "sandwiching" the glitter, beads, etc. between the two circles). Flip the whole "sandwich" over. Some sticky surface should remain around the perimeter. Carefully place the tube onto the outer ring of sticky stuff and seal the contact paper to the sides of the tube.

Now that you've constructed your kaleidoscope, test it out! Look through the end and turn it. Aim it at light. What do you see? Does your view change as you move the tube?

## Arts On The Line Porter Square MBTA Station

Station Architect:  
Cambridge Seven Associates, Inc., Cambridge, MA

*Commissioned for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority through the Cambridge Arts Council's Arts On The Line program. Funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority.*



**Artist:** Susumu Shingu  
**Title:** Gift of the Wind  
**Date:** 1983  
**Materials:** steel, aluminum  
**Dimensions:** 46' x 23'

Cambridge's most visible landmark - a 46' high windmill sculpture - was created by Japanese sculptor Susumu Shingu. Its huge red wings are designed to shift in response to the movement of the wind, not only turning clockwise and counter clockwise, but tumbling over and over in various sequences.



**Artist:** Carlos Dorrien  
**Title:** Ondas  
**Date:** 1983  
**Material:** Carved granite relief  
**Dimensions:** 24' x 2' 2"

Dorrien shaped this undulating granite wave from the same granite that faces the station entrance, creating the illusion that the wave is an organic form emerging from the headhouse wall. The sculpture runs vertically along both the exterior and interior of the 24-foot high wall, extending down to the escalator inside.





**Artist:** Mags Harries  
**Title:** Glove Cycle  
**Date:** 1984  
**Material:** Bronze  
**Dimensions:** Various sizes

A number of bronze gloves can be found throughout the station, on one of the turnstiles, tumbling down the metal divider between two escalators, embedded in the mezzanine floor and along both platforms. A small pool of gloves lies on the floor at the bottom of the escalator and a large pyramid of gloves in a corner of the inbound platform.



**Artist:** William Reimann  
**Title:** Untitled  
**Date:** 1983  
**Material:** Granite  
**Dimensions:** Six bollards

Combining traditional folk art with modern urban design, the artist sandblasted these intricate ethnic designs into the granite bollards that surround the station. The designs are based on elements unique to the various ethnic groups who populate the Porter Square area, including African, Celtic, Germanic, Greek, Hispanic, Italian, Japanese, Penobscot Indian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian and Scandinavian.



**Artist:** David Phillips  
**Title:** Porter Square Megaliths  
**Date:** 1984  
**Material:** Field stone, bronze, pavers  
**Dimensions:** 5' 8" x 2' x 20'

The site-specific art, which occupies much of the plaza outside the station, consists of four boulders that have been 'sliced' by Phillips, who then replaced some of the sections with bronze replicas, cast in his studio, leaving the impression that these bollards were simply carved out of living rock.